

Undlus (Andalusia),

A revisit

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Undlus (أندلس Andalusia) is a country named by Muslim as derivative (مغرب) of Vandalusia.¹ Vandals are Germanic people who ruled Iberian Peninsula in the fifth century Christian era (CE). The name ‘Vandal’ is a synonym for willful desecration or destruction.² Undlus forms an important part of Muslim history. This is not only from the point of view that Muslims have ruled over it for eight hundred years, but also the fact that Muslims Emirate of Granada (غرناطة) fell in 1492 CE. It was the last Muslim stronghold in Undlus, followed by complete expulsion of Muslims from Undlus by 1614 CE. It is necessary to go back to the history of Undlus in view of fresh evidence highlighting what happened there in view of the current trends.

The way the present western states are acting, called “Islamophobia”, legislations are being produced in countries against Hijab, and voices are being raised against Halal meat being served in British restaurants; right wing politics has surged in a number of countries, France is promoting religious cartoons against Muslims. The trend is taking grave shape, India which has a large Muslim population, where their lives are being strangled by restricting their activities; actions are being taken in razing Masajid, Indian Muslims being hacked to pieces, Uighurs in China incarcerated, Rohangiyas in Burma terrorized, burnt and expelled.³ All these actions have their roots in Andalusia. These actions were being practiced in 15-16th century Undlus: those activities of Catholic Christians are being repeated either sophisticatedly or clumsily around the world to purge/curb Muslims.

Muslims forget their history easily and quickly. Europe and the west remembers their history, keeps reminding it. They not only remember the true history but fiction writings, theatres and legends keeps reminding the events, some true and other not so true. Muslim historians writing history of Undlus mainly limit themselves to the period of rising Muslim rule and its glories, but only briefly mentioning the expulsion of Muslim, bringing the story to a close.⁴ It is important to go into details of the life of Muslims during the period of decline; the restrictions imposed on them; the effects produced on them due to religious extremism and Catholic Inquisition. A brief account of rise and fall of Muslim Spain is thus worth a revisit.

Tariq bin Ziad, in fact was not the first one to cross the sea and attack the mainland Iberia; he was preceded a year earlier by Tarif, a client of Musa bin Nusair in 710 CE. He landed on tiny peninsula; west of the now well-known, Gibraltar (جبل طارق). This peninsula is even now, named as Isle of Tarif (جزيرات الطريف).⁵ In 711 CE Tariq Ibn Ziad entered Andalusia after an invitation from a count Julian whose daughter had been violated by Roderick the king of Toledo (طليطلة).⁶ Tarq bin Ziad was followed by Musa bin Nusair, governor of North Africa and both, within a short

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period of seven years swept through Spain and Portugal, except the wild mountainous states in north west of the country in the region of Cantabrian mountains, Asturias (استوراس) and high table land of Galicia (جليقية). The reason described for not invading these areas is the disruption to the military effort that *Umvi Khalifa* Waleed caused. He was suspicious of activities of Musa Bin Nusair and dispatched two envoys, Mughees, followed by Abunahr asking Musa bin Nusair and Tariq bin Ziad to come to Damishq. The halt at this time was the cause which prevented the complete subduing of Iberian Peninsula which gave time, space and unity to Catholic Christians to regain power and to expel Muslim from Spain.⁷

The main advantage of Muslim forces leading to Spain was their horses⁸ and the Islamic zeal of the riders. Spanish sources mention that their horses were swift like leopards; riders were fiercer than wolf with eyes that shone like burning candles.

After the conquest, Undlus was governed by governors (والى) being appointed from Damishq until 756 CE. After the fall of Islamic Khilafat in Shaam, Abdur-Rahman Al-Dakhil established an independent state until 1031 CE. This was followed petty states to 1091. As these were weak governments, they asked fresh input from Berber dynasties of North Africa, first Al- Murabitun (المرابطون) and then Al-Muwahhidun (الموحدين) continued to rule until 1248. The Nasirid dynasty of Granada was established in 1231 and continues to survive till 1249.

It is unfortunate that over eight hundred years of Muslim rule; every so often there has been disunity, petty quarrels and infighting among the Muslim rulers. This has encouraged Christian rulers to think, assess, unite and take courage to fight and re-gain cities. As compared to conquest of the country by Muslims in seven years; it took the Catholics seven hundred years to dislodge Muslims. This started with Toledo (1085), followed by Valencia (بلنسية) Cordoba (قرطبة) Murcia (مرسية) and Seville (اشبيلية) (1248): all gone by 1266 CE. By thirteenth century more than three quarters of Undlus was in Christian hands. This only left a small state of Granada in the south of the country in Muslim hand. This state struggled, but survived for another two and half centuries (1232-1492 CE).

Spain in early 15th century was divided into crowns of Portugal, Castile (قشتالة) and Aragon (ارغون). Isabella (إزابيلا), a princess of Castile, eighteen years of age, was declared heiress to the throne of Castile in 1468 CE. She could have married Alfonso of Portugal or Charles of France but she chose Ferdinand (فرديناند) of Aragon in 1469 CE, because Ferdinand was wily, resolute and energetic; though Ferdinand was one year younger to her. The terms of marriage for Ferdinand were also humiliating. He was to live in brides' realm, Castile, and fight for his wife. He also had only a second place in the Government, but the bigger advantage was union of crowns.⁹ Both saw advantage in the union against Muslims. The marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand was the merging of two bigger states of Spain; Castile and Aragon, thus uniting the major Christian forces. Both of these monarchs were staunch Catholic Christians and had fanatic policies. Both of them united in carrying Spanish fanaticism to ruinous levels.

They gradually came down south and wanted to purge the surviving Granada state. They achieved this in 1492. It was the Christian bigotry and intolerance which was at work supported by the pope Urban II. Spanish population had hatred of Muslims because of intense propaganda of Catholic priests. French, German and Italian knights were fighting in gaining Muslim states. There was a general stir of crusading based on the knowledge of capture of Jerusalem by Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi in 1187.¹⁰ A nearer humiliation for the Christians was fall of Constantinople by Usmani *Fateh* (عثمان) Mohammad II in 1453.

The spiteful attitude of Spanish and the hatred is still visible in Spain. There is a festival in Leon, a city in the north west of Spain which on every Sunday before 5th October celebrates a festival based on a legend which is 2500 year old. They celebrate this festival supposedly based on a treaty by Christian kings of Asturias in the eighth century, by which they undertook to deliver one Hundred maidens to emir of Muslim-ruled Iberia, Abdul-Rehman I (756-88) in annual payment of tribute. A theatrical ceremony takes place, as a group of one hundred young women in medieval costume, are instructed to dance by a Muslim veiled woman, whose task is to lead them on long journey to Cordoba to deliver them to the *Harem* of the Ameer : they reach the local Cathedral where speeches take place, Mass is held, offering made to Virgin Mary to give thanks for safe delivery of women from the clutches of the infidel.¹¹ Traditionally this obligation was later removed by King Romero I (842-50), who with miraculous assistance of St. James, defeated a large Muslim army at Clavijo in the Rioja in 844CE. According to the legend James son of Zebedec, an apostle of Jesus suddenly appeared and led an army to gain victory. He became patron Saint of Spain and is known to Spaniards as '*Santiago Matamoros* (the Moor slayer).

To serious historians the battle of Clavijo is not even a topic of discussion; aspects of another battle of Monte Laturce (859) had been incorporated in the legend. A Cardinal Pedro Marcio, invented a charter where the story of above annual tribute was claimed. Scholarly consensus is that the charter is blatant forgery. First the date of charter (834) is impossible, in that Ramiro I had yet to come to the throne. In addition Christian and Muslim armies did indeed clash in battle at Clavijo, that engagement did not take place until 859, by which time king Ramiro was long since dead.¹²

Further, even to this day, a town of Baza celebrates *Cascamorras* (smashing the Moors) on 6 September every year. Men stained brown from head to foot roam the town, while people hit them, shouting that they have come to steal the image of the Virgin. This legend is apparently based on the strict policies of Al-Mowahhidun (الموحدين) who ruled in thirteenth century (1146-1248) Undlus. Additionally, at Alcoy in Valencia, St George's Day processions are taken out through streets, with some men dressed up as 'Christian Moors' and others as 'Christian Christians' and get involved in stylized battle concluding in Christian victory and celebration to that effect.¹³

Muslim armies which arrived in Undlus were mainly young men. Marriage (and concubage) with Christian brides was an important mechanism to solidify their

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authority. It is a vital element in driving social and cultural changes. Anxieties against mixed marriages were originated from Rome and by incoming French clerics. There was fear that mixed marriages will result in loss of faith. Some of the Spanish nobles, to save their state and property made treaties with Muslims like; Theodemir (ثيودمير) (d.744), but others like Pelayo invented a tale of forced marriage of a Muslim Governor, Munazza, of Gijon to his sister and sparked a Christian revolt in Asturias (718 CE).¹⁴

Another cause of hatred of Muslims in Spain was Inquisition. This amounts to today's ethnic cleansing. It was prevalent in Europe, but was in much more severe form in Spain. Inquisition in other countries was carried out by Church authorities but in Spain it was accountable to church as well as to crowns of Isabella and Ferdinand. All non- Catholics; Muslims, Jews, witches and heretics were brought before Church authorities, investigated, tortured and sentenced or burned at the stakes. A level of cruelty used involved slow crushing and fracturing the leg bones to extract confessions. Inquisition also became a source of lust for wealth, to settle old scores and used to start by complains from enemies and neighbours. Severe punishments and extreme tortures were common. These inquisitions started in the land of Ferdinand, Aragon in 1238CE. The inquisition was the black order which was the basic cause for the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Undlus.¹⁵

More details have come to light of the Inquisition in the city of Seville (إشبيلية) . The Inquisition started here in 1481 CE, It is the first Spanish city to hold mass Inquisition. St. Georges Castle was chosen as the centre of Inquisition, various courtyards and rooms were available here. There were secret dungeons beneath the tower and torture centre was stablished there. The centre relied on informers. If a Muslim was seen wearing a clean shirt on a Friday, slitting throat of an animal (ذبيحة) or washing dead and wrapping them in new linen (كفن ودفن) ;were reported for inquisition. All suspects were hauled in fitters, others bound, blindfolded and facing backwards on a donkey to open air trials. A coach carrying inquisitors brought up at the rear. Spectators reserved their places the day before and would sleep on the street to observe the spectacle the following day. The centre was carpeted, canopy over the throne of crimson. In the centre of the town was arranged an altar. Even if a person known to be dead, the trial will still go on. Lengthy reading of sentences, which may include confiscation of property, plunged into dungeon, or in a ship as galley slave, or to be burned alive at the altar.¹⁶ Many Christian landlords preferred to keep Muslim slaves to work on land and their revenues depended on them. There was an Aragonese saying which translate to 'he who has no Moor has no gold'. This saved many Muslims from Inquisition.

The population of Granada (غرناطة) were almost exclusively Muslim.¹⁷ This included not only the local residents but also Muslims who have migrated here from central and northern Christian states of the country, because of loss of Muslim power in those states. When the forces of Ferdinand and Isabella reached down south and encircled Granada, a treaty was signed for surrender of Granada in 1491 CE. It

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included sixteen clauses providing safety and security to Muslims, freedom to live like a Muslim, performing their usual religious practices and living habits, freedom to move around, additional tax not to be imposed on them and Sultan Abu Abdullah (Buabdul) to be given Alpujarras (البشارات) to govern. The treaty was supposed to be counter signed by Pope of Rome for it to be final.¹⁸

This treaty was unilaterally changed within a decade. By the next year; 1492 all Jews, 400,000 were expelled as they have economic influence over the country. Pressure was also started on Muslims; first archbishop of Granada; Hernando de Talavera, tried to win Muslims by preaching Gospel, incorporating Muslim music in processions, inviting them to dinner and inculcating Christian table manners and customs.¹⁹

They could not overcome the passive resistance of Muslims however strenuously they were applied. The first ban came in 1516 CE. Cardinal Cisneros ordered all copies Arabic books should be collected and burned. This included manuscripts of Quran, as printing of books was not invented as yet. He believed Islam will be mortally wounded by destroying its sacred books. Even the burning of sacred books did not change the attitude as Quran was well-known to be taught orally. He also started forced conversions of Muslim populations. Under pressure Muslims started being covert Muslims (تقي). They all were labelled as Moriscos, which has a derogatory flavour. A second ban came in 1526 CE, when local Muslims petitioned Charles V and paid 80,000 Ducats to the crown, to leave them in peace, resulting in some relaxations as the ban was not applied strictly. In 1554 Synod of Guadix openly condemned Islamic rituals and habits. In January 1567 at the 75th anniversary of Granada's surrender, an edict came to abandon all elements of the life of Muslims.

One Muslim by the name of Frances Nunez Muley (he appears to be a covert Muslim) on behalf of Muslims applied to local authorities a memorandum, this application still survives; in which he pleaded that Grenadian were natives, and produced vigorous argument in continuing regional practices in Granada, of bathing, dressing, naming of new-borns, language and music. He pleaded that clothing corresponds to a particular kingdom or province. All regions have their own particular styles; clothing in Morocco is different from those in Turkey. Customs are regional, as Granada fashions are unlike those of Castile. Cloths are personal choice, and depend on their comfortability, affordability and current fashion. It was a forceful petition, but did not have any effect.²⁰

Muslims were ordered to purchase new clothing, and restrictions were applied on tailors not to sew Muslim fashion clothes. They even distributed Christian attire to poor Morisco men and women. Economic arguments were also put forward; as it would be a real burden, especially for households with women and children. Use of Henna was forbidden in 1554. Muslims were not allowed to wear expensive clothing. Muslim women were not allowed to use veil. Muslims were asked to wear crescent moon on their clothes. Muslim bathing and cleaning (وضوء), was forcibly changed in 1564-65CE. Muslim Halal butchering, eating Couscous, eating together from the

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same plate, eating with hands were forbidden. Inquisitors asked Muslims to keep their door open so that they can enter freely, they started attending Muslim weddings. Meat buying from Muslim butchers was prohibited.²¹ Even speaking Arabic in public risked attracting the attention for inquisition.

Despite decades of prosecution, control and repression proved inadequate, Muslims maintained their own distinctive habits. Some even paid one Ducat each year to emperor to escape from prosecutions. In 1567 adhering to Granada customs took an active and organised opposition, this was followed by open rebellion in 1568 in Alpujarras and Granada which was forcibly subdued. At Alpujarras even a contingent of Usmani soldiers fought with them and Morisco sailors raided coastline of Iberia. In 1570 there was expulsion of Granadan Muslims. Moriscos were told to assemble in their towns and villages in groups of 1500. They were asked to walk and carry their children and old people. Behind them their personal possessions piled up in carts. They were supposed to walk thirteen miles a day towards Castile. More than 50,000 expelled. At least 20 % perished. In all some 80,000 were uprooted from their homes and resettled in the communities who had no desire to receive them, and there they were labelled as Mudejars. By the reign of Phillip III, abandoning all hope of conversion and assimilation the entire Muslim population was expelled from 1609 to 1614.

Muslim Turk admiral, who was active in Mediterranean, named Barbarossa saved 70,000 prosecuted Muslims from Undlus by taking them to his Algerian dominions.²² A Spanish source confirms the total figures expelled as 4,675,000 Moriscos.²³

Looking back at the loss of Undlus, the main factor appears to be the disunity among Muslims. They never acted as one Ummat (امت). The Muslims were a mixed bag of people. Arab element was never more than a minority. The major elements were Berbers who migrated from Northern Africa and Atlas mountain region. In addition there were Negroes from beyond Sahara brought to Undlus by Slave traders. Negro women were specially prized for their domestic virtues. So were Slavs captured in Continental Europe, from Germany to Slav areas and brought to Cordoba. After the fall of Granada slaves were plentiful on the markets of Iberian and Italian cities. The main mass of humanity within a few generations was the converted Muslims of Spanish origin called Muvaledun (موالدين). They have great influence in life and politics.²⁴ No efforts were made to mould all these Muslims to think like a single unit and form a nation. From the death of Almansoor (1002) there was swift declension in political virtues especially in Cordoba. Even in this period after 1266 CE there was no change in thinking. There were divisions, states, tribes and Taifas (طائفه) ruling in small parts of the large land mass. Ameer fought with Ameer, tribe with tribe.

There was too much dependence on Muahideens (معاشرين); this group included those Christians and Jews who did not accept Islam, they were neither pressurised nor forced to convert, but accepted as they were and had lenient treatment.

Christians were also named as Mazarabs (مزارب) having their own police and magistrates. Their disputes were dealt by their own Qazees (قاضى). Many of them had posts in civil service. The role of Christians is well illustrated in the life of Al- Cid (السيّد). He was a Christian employed by Alfonso IV of Castile. Alfonso IV sent him to collect a tribute, in which he was accused of appropriating money and was banished from the service in 1081 CE. He wandered around as mercenary soldier and found military service with Bin Hud of Saragossa (سرقسط) for five years. As soon as Almoravid (المرابطون) defeated Alfonso he joined the Christian forces, taking with him all he has learned under the Muslim employment. Later he started working for himself and carved a kingdom defeating Muslims in Valencia in 1094 CE.²⁵ He died in 1099 CE. In middle of 12th century an epic poem *El Poema de mio Cid* was written which with time became a legend, which has played a part in making him a Christian hero which is celebrated even now.²⁶

Jews took advantage of the relaxed attitude of Muslims. They had their own quarters, Juderia (مدينة اليهود). They were excise officials, treasurers, ambassadors. They played an active role in politics and controlled commercial channels between Undlus and continental Europe as well as Muslim East.

Several Jewish administrators and scholars became part of Ummaya elite. Hasday Ibn Shaprat (915-70) served under Abdul Rahman III as court physician and diplomat to Byzantine Empire and Sicily. Dunah Ibn Labrat (920-90) was a court poet; Samuel Ibn Nagharilah (993-1056) was a military leader. He wrote a polemical critic of Quran and many Muslims questioned about his holding of high office, but without any change in his position. Jewish education flourished, including their religious and secular education. Jews never adopted ornate Arabic language, but were multilingual. Thus Jews were the most favoured group among the zimmees (زيمى), and had better access to elite status.²⁷ Jews also played a part in promoting marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand in both the courts of Aragon and Castile as Ferdinand from his mother's side had Jewish blood.

How we treat our heroes is something need to be remembered, no monuments, no building, no holy days, and no legends after them. This is what happened at both the ends of Islamic Empire to the heroes of the east and west. Suleman bin Abdul Malik after being *Khalifa* in 713 CE dismissed Muhammad Bin Qasim, the conqueror of Sind in the east, kept him in Jail and then tortured him to death.²⁸ A disgraceful fate awaited Musa bin Nusair when he arrived with prisoners and booty to the court of *Khalifa* in Damishq. There is difference of opinion among various histories whether it was at the time *Khalifa* Walid or his brother *Khalifa* Suleman, who scolded Musa, asked him to stand in burning sunlight all day till he fainted, charged him, and fined him to an excessive level, which he was unable to pay. Musa died while on way to Haj with Walid in 715-6 CE.²⁹ The fate of Tariq bin Ziyad is no better, he was completely ignored and passed his life in complete obscurity. No details of his later life are known.³⁰

Thinking back, assessing the past, pinpointing our mistakes and learning from history are important parts of going back ‘to 800 years of invention and prosperity’.³¹

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